

BARACK OBAMA AND FATHERHOOD

BARACK OBAMA's speech in Chicago, sunday 15 june 2008 during the Fathers Day (in election campaign) about responsible fatherhood.

" Of all the rocks upon which we build our lives, we are reminded today that family is the most important. And we are called to recognize and honor how critical every father is to that foundation. They are teachers and coaches. [...]

But if we are honest with ourselves, we'll admit that what too many fathers also are is missing – missing from too many lives and too many homes. We know the statistics – that children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime; nine times more likely to drop out of schools and twenty times more likely to end up in prison. They are more likely to have behavioral problems, or run away from home [...]

We need families to raise our children. We need fathers to realize that responsibility does not end at conception. We need them to realize that what makes you a man is not the ability to have a child – it's the courage to raise one. [...] It's up to us to say to our daughters, don't ever let images on TV tell you what you are worth, because I expect you to dream without limit and reach for those goals. It's up to us to tell our sons, those songs on the radio may glorify violence, but in my house we live glory to achievement, self respect [...].

I know what it means to have an absent father, although my circumstances weren't as tough as they are for many young people today. Even though my father left us when I was two years old, and I only knew him from the letters he wrote and the stories that my family told, I was luckier than most. [...]

if fathers are doing their part; if they're taking our responsibilities seriously to be there for their children, and set high expectations for them, and instill in them a sense of excellence and empathy, then our government should meet them halfway. We should be making it easier for fathers who make responsible choices and harder for those who avoid them. [...]

The final lesson we must learn as fathers is also the greatest gift we can pass on to our children – and that is the gift of hope. I'm not talking about an idle hope that's little more than blind optimism or willful ignorance of the problems we face. I'm talking about hope as that spirit inside us that insists, despite all evidence to the contrary, that something better is waiting for us if we're willing to work for it and fight for it. If we are willing to believe. "

From Chicago Sunday 15 june 2008

for more information about father absence

<http://www.paternita.info/fatherhood/usa.html>